

**NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN
AMERICAN SLAVE**
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

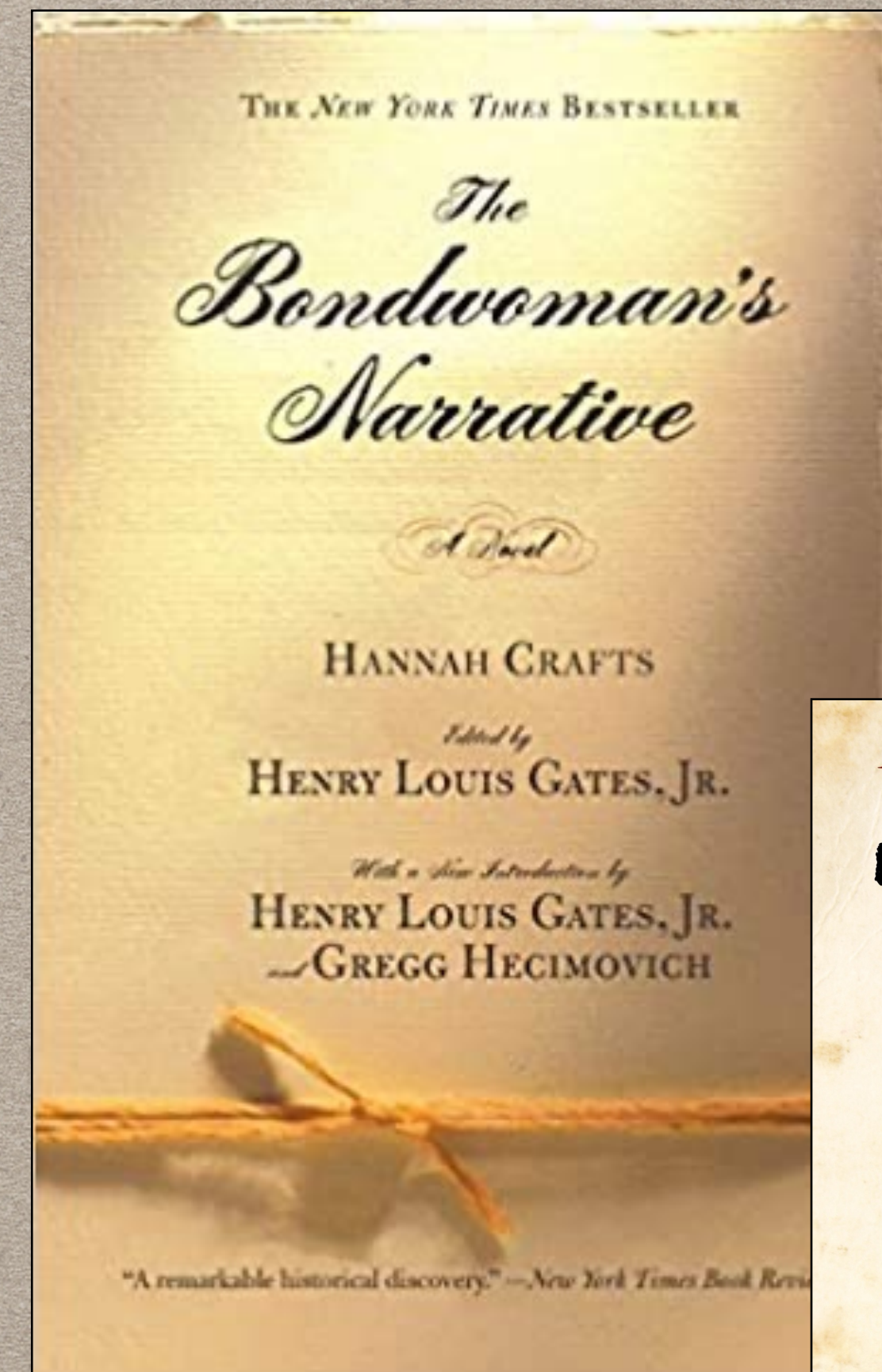
1845

THE AMERICAN CONTEXT: BEFORE THE WAR

- * **Puritanism (1620-1750)** viewed the world through the lens of faith; quest for self-government; work ethic; "manifest destiny"; education; exclusivism.
- * **Rationalism (1750-1800)** viewed the world through the lens of reason; science rivals scripture; human rights; free expression of ideas; religious tolerance; pragmatism; materialism.
- * **Romanticism (1800-1860, aka "Transcendentalism")** is a world view that seeks to move beyond ("transcend") the merely physical to discover the higher principles that individuals should follow; passion & imagination rivals reason; truth found in Nature; society is corrupt and requires reform; conscience above all. Literature becomes important.
- * **Dark Romanticism ("Gothic")** reminds us that human beings are fatally flawed, and if we want to make the world better, we must overcome the evil within ourselves.

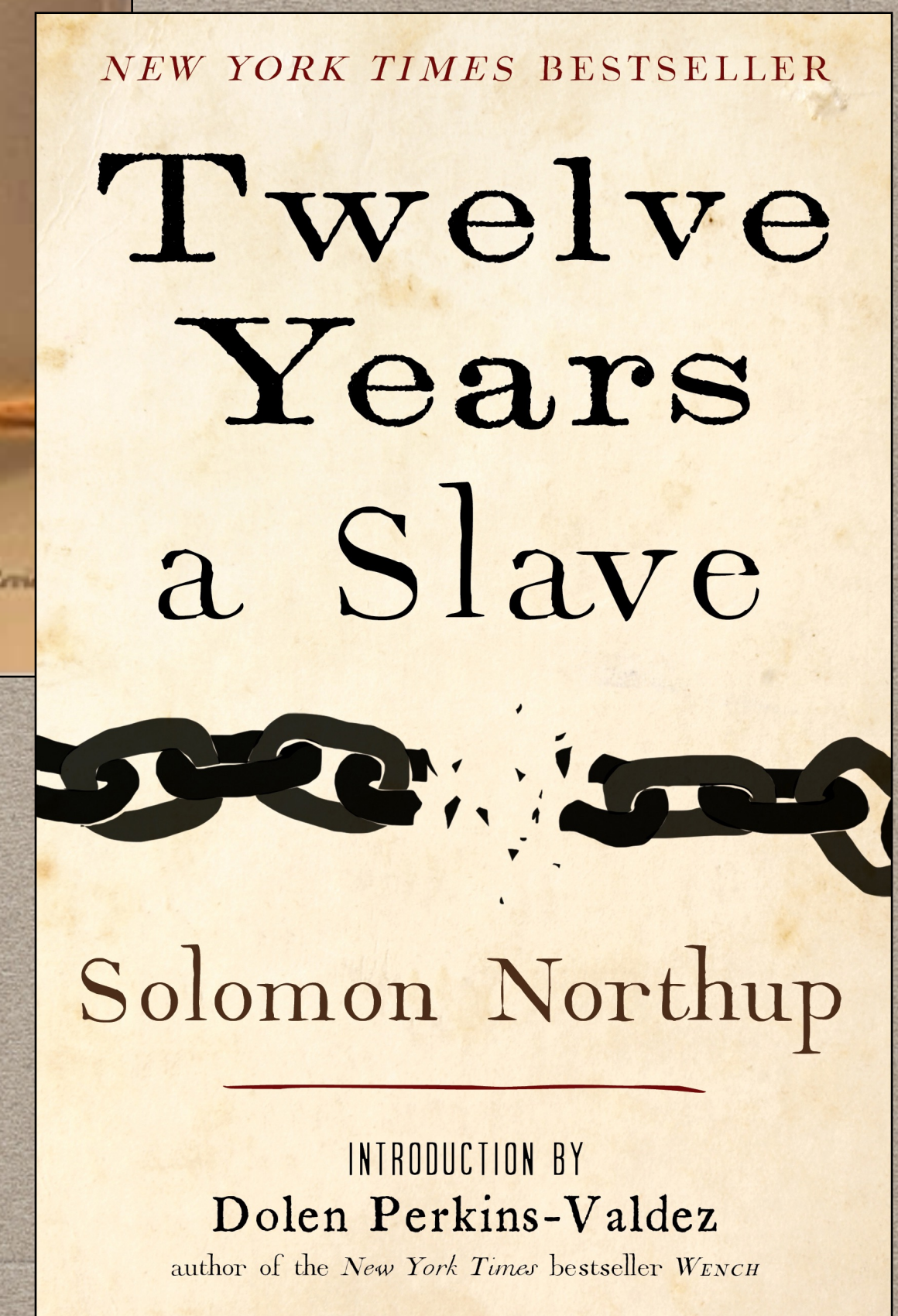
THE SLAVE NARRATIVE

- * Emerged from ideas arising out of the "American Renaissance" (Romanticism): the worth of a human being, individualism, good vs. evil, abolition, etc.
- * Offered proof that blacks were equal to whites, if not for the deprivations of their enslavement (note the elevated language)
- * Marked by Biblical imagery, language, and themes; faith is crucial to the slave's existence; critical of organized religion
- * Provided insight into African American culture and values; focused on the slave experience - the suffering and aspirations



There were 4 million slaves in the US in 1860

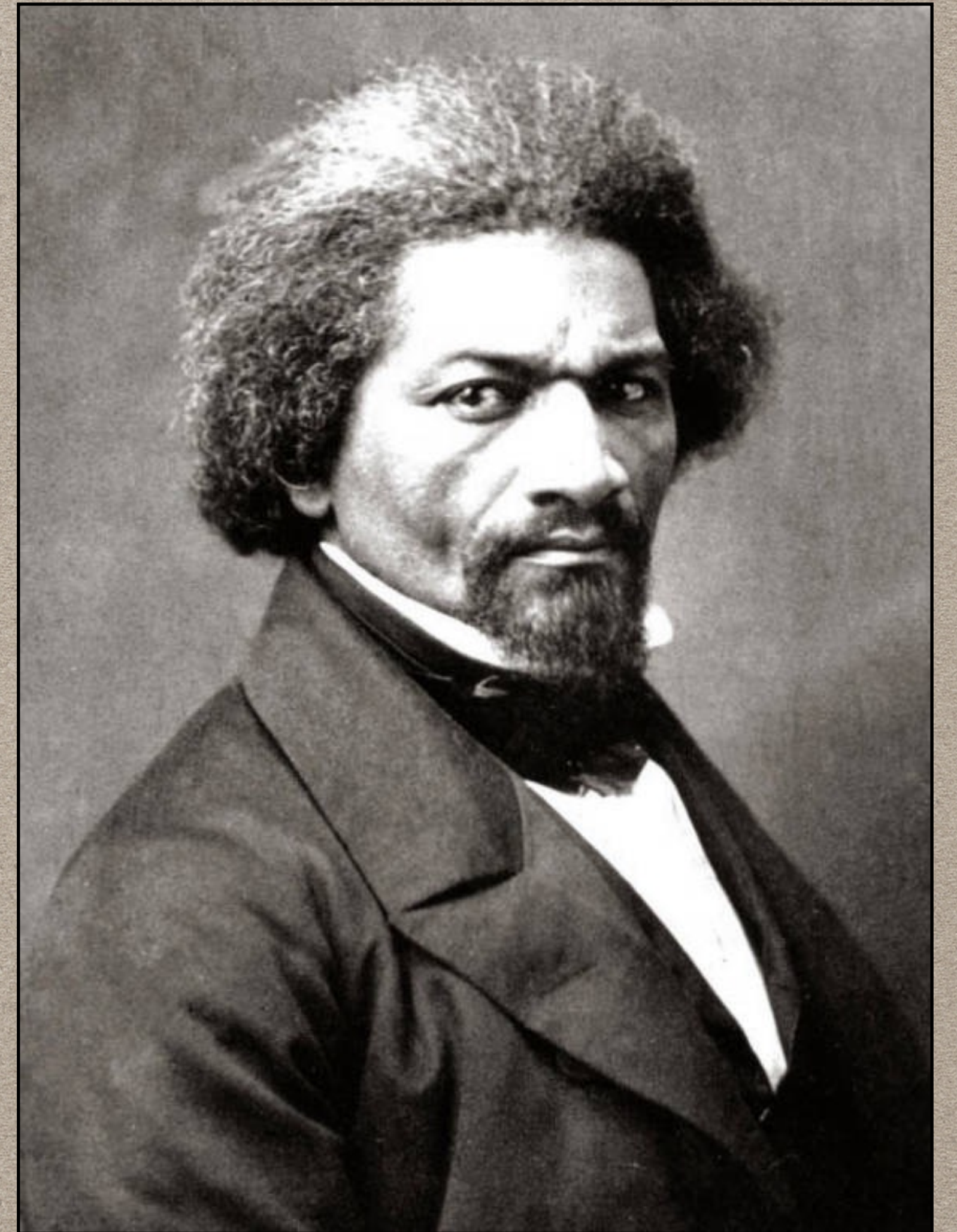
Slavery was abolished in the Northern states by 1804, but...



BIG IDEAS TO CONSIDER IN THE TEXT

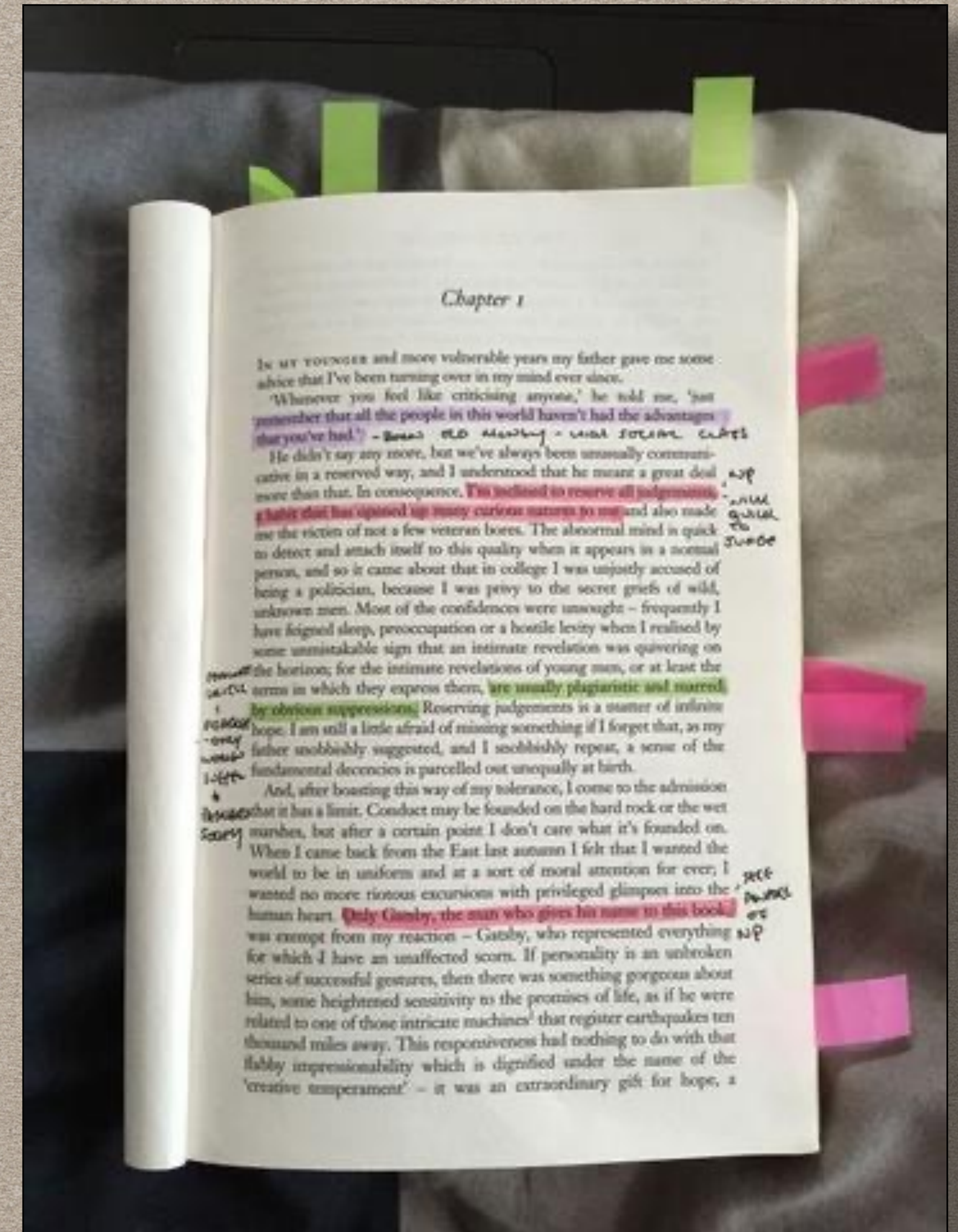
- * **Freedom:** there's a difference between legal freedom and personal freedom (**Transcendentalism**)
- * **Individualism:** Everyone has a chance to become...
- * **Religion:** the Puritans may be gone, but hypocrisy remains (**Dark Romanticism**)
- * **Education:** (1) literacy means empowerment to the enslaved; (2) the public has the right to know the truth in a free society (**Puritanism/Rationalism**)

*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,
An American Slave, Written by Himself*



STRATEGIES FOR CRITICAL READING:

- * **Annotate the text (marginal notes; underlining):** what seems significant? Look for important facts, key terms, patterns (motifs, symbols, etc.), thematic ideas, etc.
- * **Dialogue with the author:** why does the writer choose this structure, this tone, these words, etc.
- * **Reason with yourself:** consider concepts, implications, assumptions, conclusions, context, alternatives... what further thoughts come to mind after reading? What questions remain?
- * **Discuss with your classmates:** what new perspectives do they bring to the issues raised in the text?



QUIZ ON CHAPTERS II - III

1. The great privilege of the slaves Peter, Isaac, Rich, and Jake was that they were allowed to see...what?
2. According to Douglass, when do slaves sing?
3. What strategy did Colonel Lloyd use to keep the slaves out of his garden?
4. What establishment was entrusted to the care of old Barney and young Barney?
5. What was Colonel Lloyd's home plantation called?

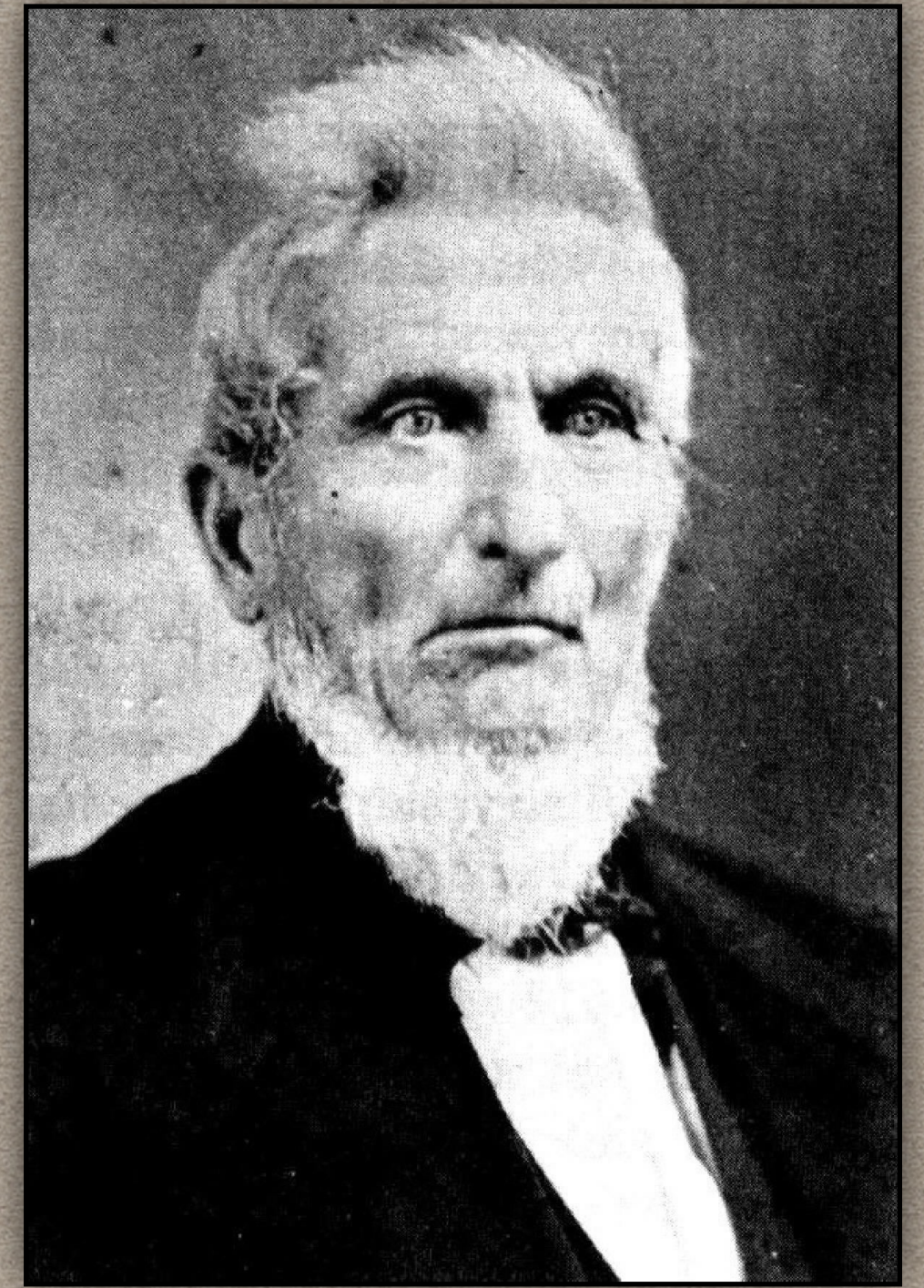


Wye House

Bonus (+5): "The field of blood and blasphemy" was so named in honor of what overseer?

QUIZ ON CHAPTERS VIII - IX

1. Why was Douglass sent back to Colonel Lloyd's plantation from Baltimore for a month?
2. What finally happened to Douglass' grandmother?
3. What event in August 1832 made Douglass' Master Thomas "a much worse man...than before"?
4. Why did Douglass repeatedly let his master's horse run away?
5. What was Douglass' ultimate punishment for being "unsuitable to [Master Thomas's] purpose"?



Captain Thomas Auld

Bonus (+5): What was Henny's disability that made her essentially "a bill of expense" rather than a productive slave?